

# Stop the Hate: Tolerance and Celebration of Diversity

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I have written before about the fundamental principles of librarianship that require at least tolerance and at best a celebration of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and points of view.

Every day, locally and nationally, we are confronted by examples of intolerance, hatred, and fear of anyone who is different or who has been defined as the “other”. It is imperative that all of us challenge our own fears and prejudices, stand up in solidarity with those who are being targeted, and denounce the acts of hatred, violence, and bigotry. None of us should think that we are immune from bigotry and attacks, because the definition of who is the “other” and who is the “enemy” can change overnight.

The horrific slaughter on October 27 [of eleven people worshipping](#) at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh is, unfortunately, not a rare event. On November 1, [anti-Semitic writings in a synagogue](#) in New York City caused classes and scheduled events to be canceled, and sowed fear in the local community. There are many incidents of threatening, violent, and offensive behavior around the country, and the world. Close to home, in August 2018 [a video showing a man holding up a sign](#) on a street in Boca Raton proclaiming that the Holocaust was a lie and accusing Jews of horrific acts caused fear and disgust among the local community.

On university campuses in Florida and beyond, fliers are found almost every day proclaiming the superiority of the white race or denouncing Jews, African-Americans, LGBTQ people, or some other group perceived to be a threat by the originators of the hate literature. Organizations such as the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#), the [Anti-Defamation League](#), and many others have [documented the rise in recruiting by hate groups that is happening on college and university campuses](#).

Intolerance can take many forms, some of which may seem relatively minor or innocent. Recently, a student expressed displeasure to a library staff member because he took offense at an item in an exhibit on the [T-Shirt as a Political Vehicle](#) that represented a political point of view he did not share. That student failed to notice that the items on exhibit represented many different points of view and wanted to have the item that offended him removed.

Censorship of ideas, vitriol and vandalism against people we don't understand, bombings targeting political opponents, shootings of people who are feared or considered offensive – these are all points on the same slippery slope of intolerance.

[FAU's Center for Holocaust and Human Rights Education](#) posted a message following the slaughter in Pittsburgh that eloquently states what is in my own heart: “The outrage caused by this senseless, hatred-filled act has traveled far beyond the Jewish communities of this Synagogue, the families and friends of the victims, and first responders. It has united the entire community and been felt across U.S. and the world. We hope the world-wide response to this tragedy will encourage each of us to think about how we treat each other. Hopefully it is with respect to everyone regardless of who ever that is. Each of us has worth and something to contribute to our communities.”

The FAU Libraries stand in solidarity with the Jewish community that has been targeted in such terrible fashion in recent days. We stand in solidarity with any individual or group who has been shunned, shamed, humiliated, threatened, intimidated, attacked, or killed because someone feared or hated them. We are hosting our third annual [Human Library event](#) on November 8 in celebration of the diversity of our university and our community. You are invited to come help us stand up to hate and intolerance. [Other events to help Stop the Hate will follow soon.](#)